

PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY TABLETOP EXERCISE

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Thurston, Mason & Lewis County Health Officer



Public Health and Social Services Department
<http://www.co.thurston.wa.us/health>

Purpose of table top exercises

- ❖ Bring different groups together
- ❖ Understand roles and responsibilities
- ❖ Educate on new issues
- ❖ Test current capabilities
- ❖ Identify areas for growth
- ❖ Build relationships



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THURSTON COUNTY MRC

❖ Tabletop exercises

- Recruiting tool
- Training health department staff
- Training hospital workers from different departments
- Doctors are not traditional “first responders” but they are often “first receivers” in a bioterrorism or chemical agent scenario.
- Do they know who to call?



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DISCLAIMER

- ❖ This scenario is a fabrication of an active imagination and is completely a work of fiction.
- ❖ Any future events or outbreaks are not the responsibility of the speakers!



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OLYMPIA, WASHINGTON

October 11, 2005



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Thurston County Health Department

October 11, 2005

- Hospitals calling to report an increase in patients with influenza like illness.
 - Local nursing home calling to report an excess number of elderly with pneumonia.
 - Doctors calling to report influenza, no lab confirmation yet.
- Five elementary schools in North Thurston School District reporting > 10 % absent.



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HEADLINES

10/11/2005

- **SEATTLE TIMES:** Hilary Clinton announces run for the White House in 2008
- **THE OLYMPIAN:**
 - *ILLNESS OUTBREAK IN NORTH THURSTON SCHOOLS...*parents concerned about water
 - *PROVIDENCE HOSPITAL AND CAPITAL MEDICAL CENTER HAVE REACHED FULL CENSUS...*patients with minor illness are asked to stay away from emergency departments.



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10/11/2005

1:30 PM

- ❖ At Board of Health, Health officer reports that influenza season seems to be early again this year.
- ❖ Public is advised to practice good respiratory hygiene.
- ❖ Washing hands is best way to achieve infection control.



THOUGHTS

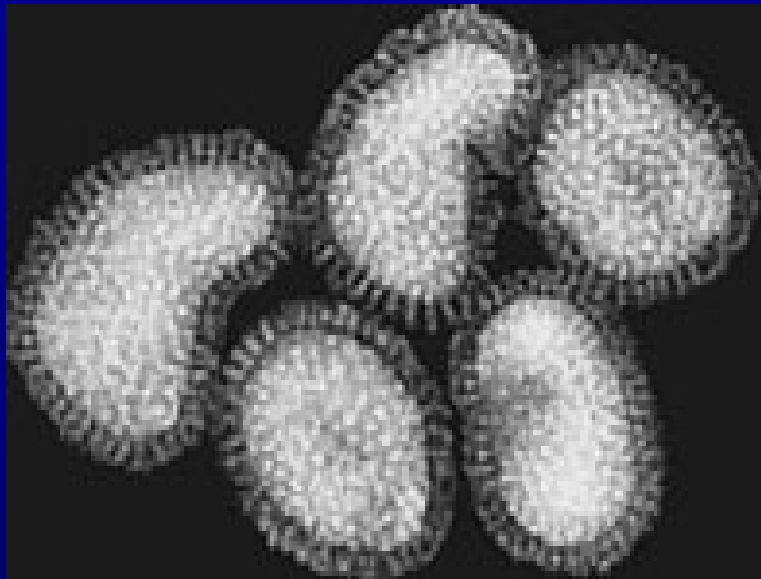
- ❖ Usual or unusual for this time of year
- ❖ Reaction to announcements



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Thurston County Health Department

October 18, 2005



- ❖ PSPH lab calls to report that a specimen from an atypical pneumonia death 2 months ago was sent to the CDC.
- ❖ It has been identified as a new Influenza A strain.

10/18/2005

4 PM

- ❖ State Epidemiologist calls to inform Health Department that a group of EIS officers from the CDC will be arriving in 12 hours to help with the death investigation and explore any possible connection to the current outbreak.



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QUESTIONS

- ❖ What other information do you need?
- ❖ Would this trigger any response?
- ❖ Who else needs to be informed?
- ❖ Next steps?



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CASE

- The atypical pneumonia patient was a 12-year boy who lived with his parents in Rochester, WA, and attended Oakville Junior High.
- Symptoms began August 15th with a runny nose, sneezing, fever, and malaise.
- By August 18th, patient had documented pneumonia.



CASE

- By the evening of August 19th he had increasing respiratory distress and was admitted to Providence St. Peter Hospital.
- His condition deteriorated so that by midnight of the 21st, he was intubated and placed on a ventilator.
- He died enroute to Mary Bridge Hospital on August 22nd.



QUESTIONS?

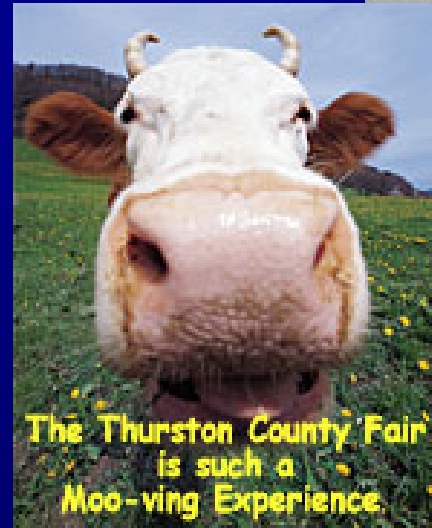
- ❖ What else do you want to know?
- ❖ Who should you call next?
 - Coroner?
 - Health officer?
 - Physician?
 - His family?
 - Hospital Infection Control?



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AUGUST 2005

- ❖ Case was very involved in 4H and had chickens, pigs and goats.
- ❖ Thurston County Fair ran from August 3 - 7, 2005.
- ❖ Poultry Theme
- ❖ Special poultry exhibits
- ❖ Special Chicken petting zoo
- ❖ Free Chick giveaway



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- ❖ Shipment of chickens arrived from Lynden, WA farm for special chicken farming exhibit.
- ❖ Lynden, WA farm owner also has a farm in Richmond, BC



POULTRY EXHIBIT

- ❖ Some chickens were dead on arrival.
- ❖ Free chicks were also from same source



QUESTIONS

- ❖ What else do you want to know?
- ❖ What are you looking for?
- ❖ At which point would you consider a health alert? What about?
- ❖ What next?
 - Hospital issues
 - Community issues



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DISPOSITION OF CHICKS



- ❖ Surplus chicks were sold to a fryer farm in Rochester, WA
- ❖ A total of 10,000 chicks were given away or distributed.

WHAT NOW?

- ❖ Who keeps track of animal and animal health?
- ❖ Is the current outbreak related to this case?
- ❖ What is major difference between human influenza and avian influenza?
- ❖ What are you going to look for now?



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Lewis County Health Department

Day 14 - October 24, 2005



- In neighboring Lewis County, the Health Department received a complaint about significantly more than usual foul (fowl) odor coming from a nearby chicken farm.

LEWIS COUNTY



- Inspecting sanitarian finds a large number of dead or dying chickens in cages.
- Concern is raised because the dying chickens were being processed and dressed for sale.
- Lewis County calls Department of Agriculture.

SUMMARY

- ❖ Case was confirmed as Influenza A/H5N1
- ❖ Farm in Lynden, WA has animals from BC farm and is now under quarantine.
- ❖ Two other cases of atypical pneumonia death were discovered, no specimens were obtained but epidemiologic link was made to chicks given away at Fair.
- ❖ After the boy died, his father sold his chickens to a Centralia farmer. That farm is also under quarantine.



ISSUES TO CONSIDER

- ❖ Isolation & Quarantine
- ❖ Notification/Media/Health alert
- ❖ Infection control – human and animal
- ❖ Influenza surveillance
- ❖ Incident command system
- ❖ Public health response team
- ❖ Management of case, contacts and community



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COMMENTS

- ❖ What if this had been SARS?
- ❖ When should infection control practices be applied?
- ❖ What if it was human influenza?
- ❖ Who else needs to understand and apply infection control procedures?
- ❖ What is incident command?
- ❖ Who is incident commander?



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ARE YOU READY?



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